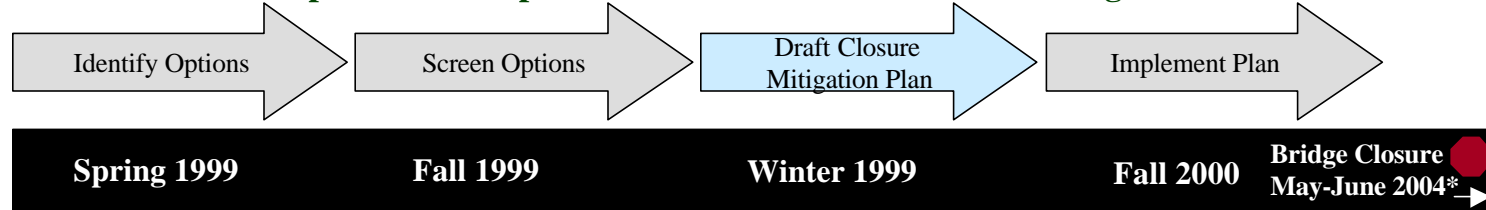




Hood Canal Bridge East-Half Replacement Project

January - February 2000

Development and Implementation Schedule for Closure Mitigation Plan



CLOSURE MITIGATION PLAN PUBLIC AWARENESS PROGRAM

The Hood Canal Bridge is a vital economic and transportation link between the northern Olympic Peninsula and the Central Puget Sound Region via the Kitsap Peninsula. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the Peninsula Regional Transportation Organization (PRTPO) have recognized the need for obtaining public input on alternatives to mitigate the impacts of the planned bridge closure. These efforts began in early 1999 with the formation of technical and stakeholder committees.

OPEN HOUSE PROCESS. To receive input and discuss the various alternatives, WSDOT and the PRTPO held a series of four public open houses. More than 170 people attended the open houses in Poulsbo, Port Hadlock, Port Angeles and Belfair. Numerous displays were prepared and provided information about the bridge closure, the process for developing a mitigation plan, and the various options being considered. WSDOT and PRTPO staff were present to answer questions and receive input. Each attendee was asked to complete a questionnaire, in order to gain more insight into the travel habits and patterns of those who travel frequently across the bridge. In addition, all attendees were afforded the opportunity to vote for their three most preferred closure mitigation options from a short-list of fifteen (a complete list of options is available by contacting the project office). Attendees were also encouraged to submit written comments.

7. Attendees were asked to choose the three (3) alternatives they would most prefer, from a list of 11 potential options:

- 22% preferred the Port Townsend – Kingston Car Ferry.
- 18% identified the LoFall – South Point Passenger.
- 17% chose a Port Townsend – Edmonds Car Ferry.

GENERAL COMMENTS. Attendees were also encouraged to offer general comments regarding other potential alternatives, the importance of the bridge and other related transportation issues. Citizens indicated they would like the project to consider:

- Transportation for medical care.
- Alternatives for freight movement.
- Increased auto and passenger ferry service.
- Port Ludlow – Port Gamble passenger only ferry.
- Port Ludlow – Kingston passenger only ferry.
- An On-Call Water Taxi across Hood Canal.
- Subsidized Private Air Flights for medical care.
- Appreciation of WSDOT efforts to communicate with the communities and plan ahead.

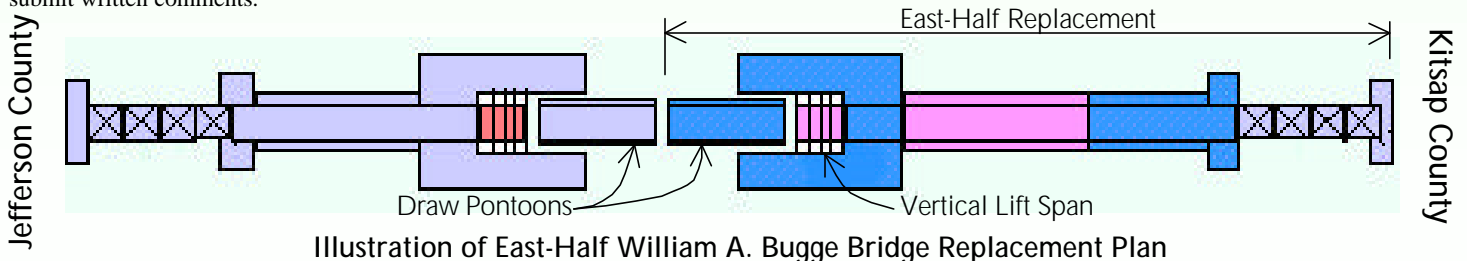


Illustration of East-Half William A. Bugge Bridge Replacement Plan

QUESTIONNAIRE/SURVEY. A brief questionnaire (9 questions) was prepared and distributed at each of the open houses. The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain information from attendees regarding typical trips across the Hood Canal Bridge. The following is a summary of the questionnaire results:

1. The primary origin and/or destination locations were Port Ludlow, Port Angeles, Sequim and Port Townsend.
2. When asked how many times each week they traveled across the bridge, the top three user groups out of five advised that:
 - 32% travel across the bridge 0 – 1 time per week.
 - 22% cross 2 – 4 times per week.
 - 18% use the Hood Canal Bridge 10 – 14 times per week.
3. The total number of daily trips across the bridge appeared to be consistent on each of the five weekdays. Attendees indicated that they traveled across the bridge more during the week than on weekends.
4. Input indicated that traffic volumes grow in the early morning hours, peaking at mid-morning. Volumes then plateau until early evening when there is another small peak. Traffic volumes then begin to drop off later in the evening.
5. When asked why they cross the bridge:
 - 32% advised that they were typically making leisure trips.
 - 14% said they use the bridge to commute.
 - 24% reported that they travel across the bridge for medical appointments.
6. Eighty-one (81) percent of the attendees stated that they typically travel in autos, vans, and pickup trucks or on motorcycles; as compared to RVs, transit or commercial vehicles.

ALTERNATIVES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION. The Hood Canal Bridge Replacement committees initially identified over 60 potential alternatives for mitigating the bridge closure. The list of alternatives was refined through a four-tiered evaluation process and through gathering public feedback at four open house meetings. The initial list and the “shortlist” of viable alternatives were presented at the open houses. As a result of the input gathered at the open houses, the Hood Canal Bridge Stakeholders Committee has selected eleven alternatives for further study. The preliminary preferred option list includes:

- **Rideshare Program** – Develop a program to provide ride share opportunities.
- **Freight Barge across Hood Canal**
- **Signage** – Provide advance signage throughout the Puget Sound Region to outline travel options.
- **Subsidized Medical Flights**
- **Continuing Public Outreach** – Continue providing information and receiving input regarding the closure through a variety of mediums.
- **Port Townsend to Edmonds Auto Ferry**
- **Port Townsend to Kingston Auto Ferry**
- **Port Townsend to Seattle Passenger Only Ferry**
- **LoFall to Southpoint Passenger Only Ferry** – Provide passenger only ferry service across Hood Canal in coordination with transit service, vanpools and rideshare programs.
- **US101 Corridor Enhancements** – Construct enhancements to the US101 Corridor to aid the increase in vehicles traveling along the Hood Canal.
- **Hotel/motel assistance** – Provide a program where temporary housing assistance is provided to commuters and/or persons in need of medical services.

Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization

* The project is now expected to be delayed at least one year due to recently decreased funding levels. Updated schedule information will be provided in future flyers.

BRIDGE HISTORY

After the west-half of the Hood Canal Bridge pontoons sank during a storm in February 1979, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) utilized emergency funds from the Federal Government to replace the sunken portion of the bridge, and to rehabilitate the west transition span. The bridge was re-opened to traffic in October 1982.

Following an extensive evaluation of the bridge in 1997, WSDOT published a report outlining the factors affecting the service life of the east-half floating portion of the bridge. WSDOT's evaluation considered both rehabilitation of the existing structure and replacement of the east-half. WSDOT found that the east-half of the structure has been subjected to much greater storm-related forces than envisioned during the original design, and that these storms have caused mechanical and structural damage that has necessitated repair.

Due to the extensive cracking caused by violent storms, the remaining service life of the east-half pontoons has been reduced. Storms have also caused deterioration of the east roadway structure. The analysis concluded that the bridge must be replaced by 2007, or there is a significant likelihood that the bridge would be condemned for safety reasons and closed to traffic.

WSDOT concluded the risk of critical damage due to major storms, in itself, is sufficient cause for replacement of the east-half. The estimated cost of the east-half replacement project including design and construction engineering, right-of-way and contingencies is approximately \$170 million. The replacement of the east-half will result in a 6 to 8-week closure in late Spring 2004*.

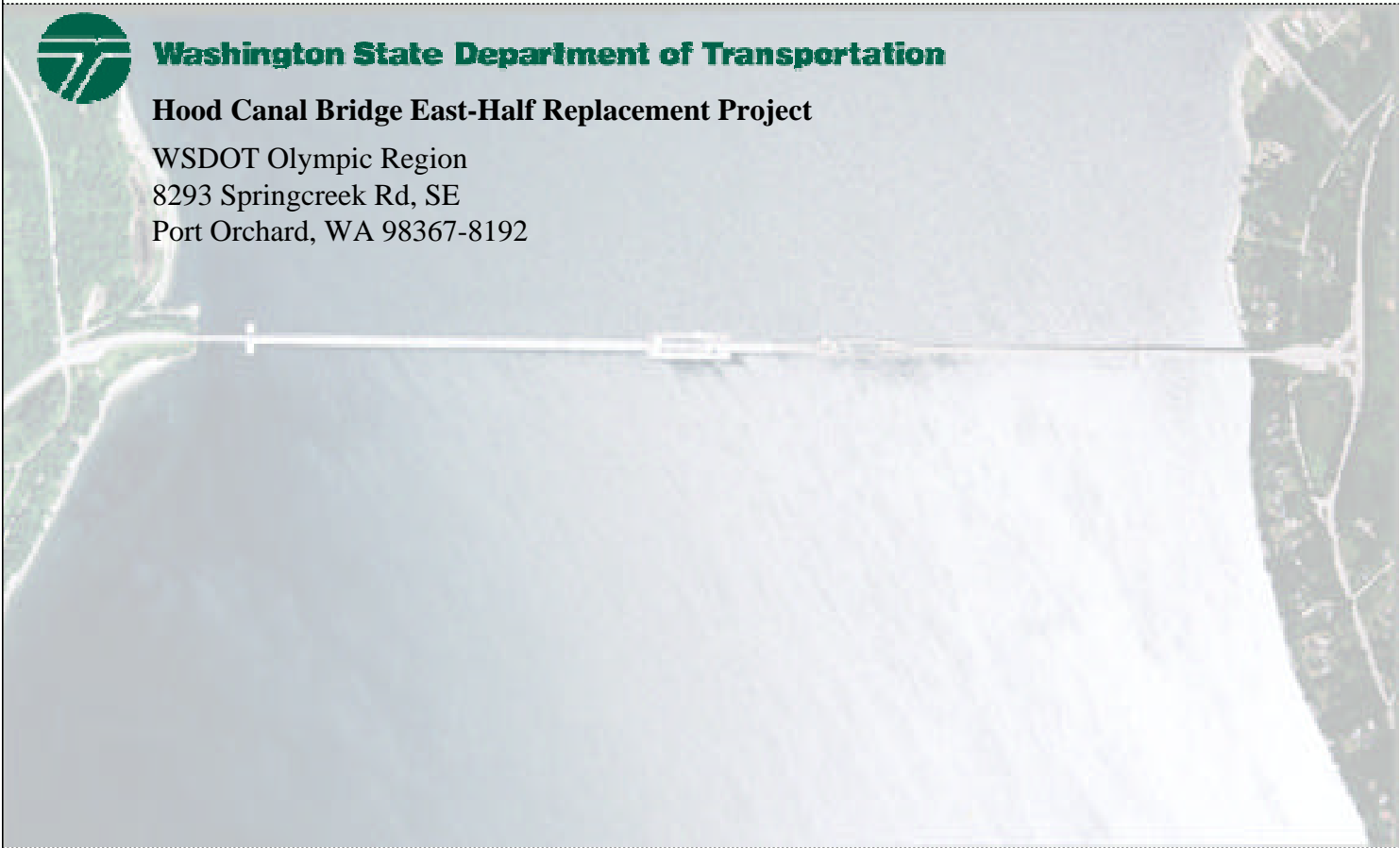
WSDOT and the Peninsula Regional Transportation Organization (PRTPO) have jointly undertaken a Public Outreach Program to gather input and provide information regarding the impacts from the planned closure.



Washington State Department of Transportation

Hood Canal Bridge East-Half Replacement Project

WSDOT Olympic Region
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Port Orchard, WA 98367-8192



To comment, request information, or to learn more about the project, write to WSDOT, Port Orchard Project Engineer's Office at the address above, or e-mail at orportorchard@wsdot.wa.gov

NEXT STEPS

The Closure Mitigation Plan has been an ongoing process by WSDOT and the PRTPO. The Plan objective is to identify impacts of the bridge closure on users and potential alternatives to mitigate those impacts through the formation of a coalition of regional, local, and community partners. This community participation has included the formation of the Hood Canal Bridge Replacement Stakeholders Committee and the Hood Canal Bridge Replacement Advisory Committee, the distribution of informational flyers, and the seeking of input at open houses. The process has included a "fatal flaw" analysis of nearly 60 options, gathering of input from local communities and bridge users, discussion of identified impacts and needs, and shortlisting of eleven alternatives for further study.

Where do we go from here? WSDOT and the PRTPO, in conjunction with the Committees, will begin pre-design on the "shortlist" of preferred alternatives that resulted from the public process. A Preliminary Engineering effort will begin in early 2000 to evaluate the various mitigation options. This evaluation effort will consider the benefits of the alternatives, the costs of construction and implementation, the general viability of each alternative and the anticipated success of each alternative at addressing the impacts caused by the closure of the bridge. A Final Closure Mitigation Plan that includes a number of travel and information/education options will result from that engineering effort. It is anticipated that the analysis will be complete and the Final Closure Mitigation Plan ready for implementation by late 2001.

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